

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 22, 23 and 41-43 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 10, 22 and 41 are amended, new claims 42 and 43 are added, and claims 9 and 12 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 10, 22 and 41 and for new claims 42 and 43 can be found in the specification as originally filed, for example, at paragraphs [0009], [0010], [0013], [0016] and [0040]-[0043]; and in originally filed claims 1, 2, 9-11, 22 and 41. No new matter is added by these amendments.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 1, 2, 6-8, 22, 23 and 41 contain allowable subject matter, and are objected to as depending from rejected base claims. In accordance with the helpful suggestion in the Office Action, claims 1, 22 and 41 have been amended to place these claims into independent form, and claims 2, 6-8 and 23 depend from and incorporate all of the limitations of claims 1 and 22. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 22 and 41, and their dependent claims 2, 6-8 and 23 are in condition for allowance.

II. New Claims

By this Amendment, new claims 42 and 43 are added. Claims 42 and 43 depend from independent claims 22 and 41, respectively, and includes all of the limitations thereof. Applicants respectfully submit that, for at least the same reasons that claims 22 and 41 are in condition for allowance, claims 42 and 43 are patentable over the cited references.

III. Claim Rejections

The Office Action rejects claims 9 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,955,395 to Andorf et al. The Office Action also rejects claims 9, 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over European Patent Application Publication EP 0 833 401 to Aoyama.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to claim 10, claims 9 and 12 having been canceled herein.

By this Amendment, claim 10 has been amended to depend from claim 1, which has been rewritten in independent form. The Office Action indicates that claim 1 is allowable over the cited references. Applicants respectfully submit that, for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is in condition for allowance, claim 10 is patentable over the cited references. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 2, 6-8, 10, 22, 23 and 41-43 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:JMS/ccs

Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time
Information Disclosure Statement

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